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FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 17, 1998*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4569) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, Today I want this Congress to focus on a government that has spent years practicing torture on its own people. However, when you go home and turn on the evening news, good luck trying to find any story that reveals this particular human rights issue. And better luck getting this administration to pay any attention to the plight of thousands of innocent civilians.

We speak of tragedies all over the world this time of the year. We speak of the struggles in Africa, Cambodia, and Burma. We reprimand China for its draconian abortion policies and illegal human organ sales. We threaten to stop international military and educational training (IMET) from Indonesia for abuses in East Timor. We even criticize longstanding allies like Turkey for its treatment of its Kurdish citizens without addressing the brutal murders carried out by the PKK, a Kurdish Marxist terrorist organization.

Unfortunately, there is one human rights issue that continues to escape the attention of this administration, some Members of Congress and the media. That issue involves the plight of the Sikhs in Punjab or Khalistan; the plight of the Kashmiris; the plight of Christians in Nagaland; and the plight of the "untouchables", the lowest caste in India's caste system.

Mr. Speaker, the Indian Government is one of the world's worst human rights abusers. You may ask, well if that's true, why doesn't the world know?

Since the 1970's, Amnesty International and other human rights groups have been barred from India. Mr. Speaker, even the Government of Cuba allows Amnesty into their country.

In fact, there are half-million Indian soldiers occupying Punjab, and another half-million troops occupying Kashmir. Since 1947, India has killed over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland; 250,000 Sikhs in Punjab from 1984-1992; and 53,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988.

For the last sixteen years, I have been coming to this well to call attention to Punjab, where the Indian military receives cash bounties for the slaughter of innocent children. And to justify their actions, they are labeled "terrorists".

According to our own State Department, India paid over 41,000 cash bounties to police for killing innocent people from 1991-1993!

Also in Punjab, Sikhs are picked up in the middle of the night only to be found floating dead in canals with their hands and feet bound together. Some Kikhs are only so fortunate, many are never found after their abduction.

Recently, the India Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) told the supreme court that it had confirmed nearly 1,000 cases of unidentified bodies that were cremated by the military!

And it does not get any better in Kashmir. Women, because of their Muslim beliefs, are taken out of their homes in the middle of the night and are gang-raped while their husbands are forced to watch and wait inside at gunpoint.

It was hoped that the new governments in Delhi and Punjab would stop the repression which the Indian Supreme Court describes as "worse than a genocide!"

Mr. Speaker, opponents will say the recent election in Punjab of a Sikh dominated coalition and the fact that an "untouchable" is now the President of India is evidence of their democratic progress.

But, I can tell you that this new government in Punjab is closely aligned with the authoritarian BJP Prime Minister Gudjaral of India and India's "untouchable" president is merely a figurehead. Mr. Speaker, would democracies continue the rampant campaign of genocide?

On July 22, 1998, Baljit Singh, a Sikh youth of Burj Dhillwan Village, died of complications from torture-style brutality inflicted by the Punjab police.

Also in July of 1998, police picked up Kashmira Singh of the village of Khudial Kalan on the pretext that they were investigating a theft. They then tortured him for 15 days. They rolled logs over his legs until he couldn't walk; they submerged him in a tub of water; and they slashed his thighs with razor blades and stuffed hot peppers into the wounds.

On April 1, 1998, Brother Luke, a Roman Catholic priest was murdered in the eastern state of Bihar. His body was found with a bullet hole through the head. He was a member of Mother Teresa's world-renowned charity organization. This is the fourth priest in 2 years that has been murdered in India.

On October 30, 1997, Reverend A.T. Thomas was found beheaded also in Bihar, apparently killed for aiding the no-caste "untouchables." Amnesty International has linked the Bihar state government to the murder of Rev. Thomas! The Catholic Bishops conference of India has criticized the government for doing nothing to protect Catholic priests and for failing to prosecute those responsible.

On July 12, 1997, in Bombay, 33 Balits (black untouchables) were killed by Indian police during demonstrations.

On July 8, 1997, 36 people were killed in a train bombing in Punjab. Two ministers of the Punjab Government have blamed the Punjab police. The bombing occurred a day after 9 policemen were convicted of murder!

On March 5, 1997, a death squad picked up Kashmir Singh, an opposition party member. He was thrown in a van, tortured, and murdered. Finally, his bullet-ridden body was dumped out on the roadside.

These military forces operate beyond the law with complete impunity!

Mr. Speaker, the United States should not support a government that condones widespread abuses with our hard-earned tax dol-

lars! It is time India is held accountable for its continued violation of basic human rights!

The Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, "untouchables," and women of India are desperately looking to this Congress for help. The time has come for action, it is time for America to take a stand!

Considering all this, the President still requested \$56.5 million in development assistance for India in fiscal year (FY) 1999. That is an increase of almost \$1 million over last year.

As everyone is aware, as a result of India's recent nuclear test, the President has imposed a broad range of sanctions on India for violation of section 102(b) of the Arms Export Control Act. Also known as the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994, or more popularly, the Glenn Amendment—it prohibits a variety of assistance and commercial transactions between the U.S. and any country if the President determines that that country—if it is a non-nuclear-weapon state—has detonated a nuclear explosive device.

India has disregarded regional and international stability by placing missiles and exploding thermonuclear weapons, fission weapons, and hydrogen bombs near the Pakistan border. Indeed, their behavior has been clearly unacceptable, and they are being properly punished. I applaud the President for his fortitude.

And, if the President continues to follow through with the current law, this should send a strong signal to the Indian Government that it is not going to be business as usual with the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are tired of helping bullies who punish their own people and threaten neighbors. India is still the 5th largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid in the world; India is the world's largest borrower from the World Bank with more than \$44 billion in loans; India votes against the U.S. at the United Nations more often than any other country, except Cuba.

It does not justify sending more hard-earned tax dollars to a country that claims to be the largest democracy in the world, but obviously shares none of our most cherished values.

Democracies don't commit genocide!

Let's put the brakes on the foreign aid gravy train to India!

Ask the President not to waver on his stance with India!

80 YEARS OF HISTORY OF McGEE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, BERKELEY, CA 1918-98

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 23, 1998*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, from an idea conceived by the late Reverend Silks Lincoln Tillman, a tiny Mission was organized in 1918 at 1934 Bonita Avenue in Berkeley, California. The purpose of the Mission was to meet the spiritual needs of the citizens in the rapidly growing city of Berkeley. The name, Mt. Pleasant, was given to the Mission because of the great love Reverend Tillman had for Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in his native home of Mississippi. Rev. Tillman served both as Pastor and Sunday School Superintendent of Mt. Pleasant Mission.